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MEMORANDUM

DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

The Situation in Vietnam

Top Secret

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10 May 1967



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Approved For Release 2004/03/18 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001900010057-3

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Information as of 1600
10 May 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

Heavy fighting between US Marines and North Vietnamese Army regulars in the area of Khe Sanh in western Quang Tri Province has subsided.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

The heavy fighting around Khe Sanh in western Quang Tri Province has subsided (Para. 1). [redacted] provided additional information on the command structure in VC Military Region 5 (Paras. 2-11). Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics (Para. 12).

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II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

The Constituent Assembly has approved more than two thirds of the articles pertaining to the presidential electoral law, but faces the possibility of delay over Article 24 (Paras. 1-2).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

The Kien An Airfield near Haiphong was bombed on 10 May, leaving only the major air bases at Phuc Yen and Hanoi/Gia Lam not yet hit (Paras. 1-2). [redacted]

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:

There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments:

Soviet Premier Kosygin remarks on Soviet aid to the DRV (Paras. 1-3). Many North Vietnamese students studying in the Soviet bloc (Paras. 4-7).

VI. Other Major Aspects:

A recent report indicates that the Viet Cong make arrangements with Cambodian officials on the local level for use of Cambodian territory (Paras. 1-6). [redacted]

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[redacted] extension on the Hanoi - Dong Dang rail line (Paras. 7-8).

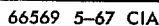
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ANNEX

South Vietnam Battle Statistics
1963 to week of 30 Apr - 6 May 1967
- Weapons and Personnel Losses
- Viet Cong Attacks and Incidents

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Fighting between US Marines and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars in western Quang Tri Province near Khe Sanh has subsided following the sharp contact reported during a five-hour engagement on 9 May. A Marine patrol reported the discovery of 203 fresh graves, each containing at least one NVA body, raising cumulative Communist casualty toll to 764 since the heavy fighting began in the area northwest of Khe Sanh on 25 April.

Additional Information on the Command Structure of VC Military Region 5

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] has provided additional details on the evolving command structure of the Viet Cong's Military Region 5 (MR 5). In mid-1965, [REDACTED] MR 5 headquarters held a meeting of high-ranking cadre to discuss the US military successes in this region and to plan future Viet Cong counterstrategy. One conclusion of the conference was that MR 5 was too large to operate under a single command and control structure. The conferees suggested that MR 5, known as the central Vietnam battleground, be divided into several separate military regions to take advantage of the area's different geographic features and to improve the command system. After the conference, the commander of MR 5, NVA Major General Nguyen Don, went to Hanoi to submit the recommendations of the conference to the North Vietnamese high command.

3. The following April, [REDACTED]

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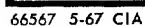
[REDACTED] General Don announced that the Hanoi high command had decided to establish several military regions within MR 5. The existing MR 5 command staff was to be responsible for transacting all of the business of the newly established military regions until new staffs could be developed.

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The Tay Nguyen/Lower Laos MR

5. [] the Communists consider the Tay Nguyen or western highland battleground the most important or "principal strategic" battleground in South Vietnam and as such the number one theater of operations. The concentration of enemy forces in this area has been evident since early 1965, when the first NVA/VC division-level formations appeared there. [] the Tay Nguyen battleground is important to the Communists because it is located on the Cambodian border and offers a safe haven for the maintenance of Communist reserve forces. The terrain of this area is also considered highly favorable to VC regular and guerrilla operations.

The Tri Thien/Central Laos MR

6. [] this region, the site of much of the current military action in South Vietnam, is important because it offers the Communists the best opportunity for tactical surprise. With Communist-controlled areas of North Vietnam and Laos adjacent to this battleground, NVA/VC forces can easily and quickly maneuver and redeploy both their troops and their firepower. Communist success in this respect can be attested to by the recent experience of US Marines in the Khe Sanh area. The Marines ran into extremely well-fortified Communist positions which may have been under construction for as long as six months to a year.

7. [] the Communists consider this area the first line of defense for North Vietnam and use this theater of operations to gain combat experience for NVA troops. The forces used in the Tri Thien battleground are to be divisions mobilized in North Vietnam, and are to be rotated every three months for service in South Vietnam. [] the divisions located from Thanh Hoa south to the 17th Parallel include the 324B, 325th, 341st, 304th, 330th, and 271st divisions. Elements of the first three units have been identified in Quang Tri Province.

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8. Communist forces in this area are tasked with "pinning down" several divisions of allied forces, and, [] [] had the mission of inaugurating the summer campaign in Central Vietnam in early April. Main attacks are to occur in this area in June. Increased Communist aggressiveness in this area did begin in April, but it is not yet clear what effect the fighting of recent weeks will have on future Communist plans.

The "Delta Battleground"

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9. This battleground, which lies in the delta and coastal regions of MR 5, presently constitutes the main source of local manpower and materiel for the Communists. [] [] the objectives of operations in this area are to push guerrilla warfare, develop and hold liberated areas, wear down and destroy allied units of battalion size and smaller, attack allied posts at any costs, destroy communications, disrupt economic activity in urban areas, sabotage the rural pacification program, support the guerrilla effort in the delta area, and establish base areas in the mountainous regions. Activity was to begin in this region in April or May 1967. If allied forces were too powerful for the Viet Cong, the program was to be pushed back to June.

Evaluation

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10. Much of the information [] confirms previous information available to MACV. For example, there is a concentration of Viet Cong forces in each of the three regions mentioned, and in recent months there have been a number of indicators that these forces--particularly in the coastal provinces and Tri Thien areas--were preparing for expanded operations.

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11. [] the reorganization of MR 5, however, still leaves a number of unanswered questions. One of these is the relationship of the MR to the Central Office of South Vietnam and to North Vietnamese authorities in either Hanoi or in MR 4. [] other [] reports indicate several Hanoi-controlled military command echelons in the area of the DMZ and in Quang Tri Province []

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[] indicated that the two new regions of Tri Thien and Tay Nguyen are subordinate to MR 4 in North Vietnam, and have left the impression that the reduced MR 5 (comprised of the six coastal provinces) is not.

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12. [redacted] the term MR 5 is used interchangeably to refer to both the pre-1965 region (all the northern provinces as far south as Darlac and Khanh Hoa) and the new, more limited six-province region on the coast. He reports North Vietnamese General Hoang Van Thai as currently commander of MR 5--presumably the newly reduced one [redacted]

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General

Thai is a vice minister of the DRV Ministry of National Defense, a senior general and deputy chief of staff in the North Vietnamese Army, and a full member of the North Vietnamese central committee.

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Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

13. The week of 30 April - 6 May compared with the week of 23-29 April:

I. Viet Cong Incidents

	<u>23-29 April</u>	<u>30 April-6 May</u>
Attacks	26	37
Battalion or larger.....0	2
Small Unit.....26	35
Harassment	393	417
Terrorism	27	45
Sabotage	20	11
Propaganda	8	32
Antiaircraft	<u>314</u>	<u>328</u>
TOTAL INCIDENTS	788	870

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II. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>23-29 Apr</u>	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>	<u>23-29 Apr</u>	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>
Killed	1,152	1,903	76	212
Wounded	-----	-----	311	690
Missing/ Captured	-----	-----	<u>9</u>	<u>54</u>
TOTALS	1,152	1,903	396	956

	<u>US</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>23-29 Apr</u>	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>	<u>23-29 Apr</u>	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>
Killed	181	243	4	18
Wounded	957	1,747	9	26
Missing/ Captured	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	1,138	1,990	13	44

III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>23-29 Apr</u>	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>	<u>23-29 Apr</u>	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>
Individual	386	Not	19	103
Crew-served	<u>15</u>	Reported	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
TOTALS	401		19	106

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The Constituent Assembly has voted on more than two thirds of the articles dealing with the presidential election law. If the present pace continues, the assembly conceivably could finish the job by the end of this week. The articles pertaining to the election of the legislature are yet to be considered.

2. One possible obstacle to a quick end to the proceedings connected with the presidential electoral law is the reopening of debate on Article 24. This article provides that the winner of the presidential race will be the candidate who gets the most votes. As the provision now stands, there is no assurance that the winner will achieve a convincing popular mandate, either by garnering a specified minimum percentage of the vote, or by winning a runoff election. It is possible, however, that the assembly may reopen discussion on this issue before voting approval of the entire electoral law. Opponents of the present provision are mainly delegates backing civilian candidates who fear that the provision unduly favors a military candidate.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. The third of North Vietnam's five principal air facilities was bombed on 10 May when US Navy aircraft struck the Kien An Air Base six miles southwest of Haiphong. The airfields at Kep and Hoa Lac have been hit repeatedly since 24 April. Results of the strike on Kien An have not yet been received. One A-4 aircraft was lost to a surface-to-air missile.

2. The 5,900-foot airstrip at Kien An has been used as a base for AN-2s--small, armed transport aircraft involved in coastal defense operations--and as the home field for North Vietnam's largest helicopters, the MI-6 Hook.

It is possible that some MIGs were transferred to this field after the raids on Hoa Lac and Kep.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Soviet Premier Kosygin recently confirmed that an arrangement has been worked out to ensure the satisfactory delivery of Soviet aid materiel to the DRV through China. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Kosygin said that all problems relative to this agreement had not been cleared up, but that it will permit a "considerable increase in support" to the North Vietnamese. The Soviet premier stated that the North Vietnamese would transship the material from the Sino-Mongolian border, whereas previous reports had indicated the transshipment point would be at the Sino-Soviet border at Manchouli.

2. The significance of any new agreement, if indeed it is more than an updating of the 1965-67 transit agreement, should not be exaggerated. A 30 April Chinese People's Daily "Observer" article which bitterly attacked Moscow's appeals for "united action" on Vietnam made it very clear that any procedural agreement on the transit question will not carry over into the broader area of Sino-Soviet agreement on tactics on the Vietnam war.

3. Kosygin's statement, which like other reports have probably been intended to reach US officials, seems primarily designed to warn the US of the willingness of the Hanoi regime to persist in the war, and of Soviet determination and ability to assist the DRV in the face of continued US bombing.

North Vietnamese Youth Training in Soviet Bloc

4. The 30 April issue of Pravda stated that 512 Vietnamese youths had just left North Vietnam to study in the Soviet Union. According to the

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Soviet newspaper, this was the first of a group of 6,000 Vietnamese workers and engineering-technical officials who will be accepted into vocational-technical schools throughout the USSR in the next few years.

5. On 30 March the Soviets also announced that under the terms of the new Soviet - North Vietnamese cultural and scientific agreement there would be 1,500 new Vietnamese students and trainees enrolled in Soviet institutions in 1967. The announcement also stated that there were currently 2,100 Vietnamese students in the USSR.

6. In the past six months several agreements to train North Vietnamese have been announced by East European countries. Last December the Hungarians stated that they had agreed to train 1,000 Vietnamese in the areas of pharmaceuticals and telecommunications, and on 5 May the East Germans announced that 300 unspecified Vietnamese trainees had arrived there.

7. Czechoslovakia announced in March that 2,100 Vietnamese apprentices are to be trained in Czechoslovakia in the next three to five years. The first group of 500 is to arrive in July. The Czechs further stated that 20,000 Vietnamese are now or soon will be training or studying in countries of the socialist camp.

8. There is no way to verify these figures, but it is likely that the USSR and East European countries would be willing to step up the education and training of North Vietnamese in the face of the disruption caused by the war. If the estimated figure of 20,000 Vietnamese going abroad for education and training is relatively accurate, it would not seem that the war is yet causing Hanoi any significant manpower shortages.

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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

Viet Cong Use of Cambodian Territory

1. Further indications that the Viet Cong are using Cambodian territory were revealed in a preliminary analysis of an enemy document which was recently captured in northern Tay Ninh Province.

2. The document, dated 8 September 1966, is a report from the party committee probably subordinate to the 70th Security Guard Regiment and indicates that the Communists made an agreement with unspecified Cambodian officials in April 1966 enabling Communist forces to use Cambodian territory for sanctuary during allied sweep operations. The document also stated that in some instances Viet Cong elements refused to return to Vietnam following allied search-and-destroy operations because of the safety they enjoyed in Cambodian territory.

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4. It is likely that the agreement mentioned in the document represented only an understanding between one or more Viet Cong units and local Cambodian officials in the Tay Ninh Province/Cambodian border area. In the past, the Viet Cong and Cambodian border forces have made other agreements which usually involved the stipulation that the Communists must be unarmed when crossing the border. The document does not clarify what arrangements the Vietnamese Communists have made for the construction of permanent installations, some of which are in the area and cannot be concealed from Cambodian authorities.

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5. Tribal people are fleeing from northeastern Cambodia into southern Laos because of unrest in their native areas. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
montagnard elements have come under increasing harassment from "Vietnamese Communists" operating in the area. The montagnards also expressed fear that fighting would shortly break out between pro-Communist Cambodians and anti-Communist Cambodian Army units.

6. Over 200 Cambodian Lave have sought refuge in Laos thus far and more are reportedly en route. It is possible that increased Communist pressure on tribal elements to aid them is the cause of the unrest. The northeastern area of Cambodia bordering Laos and Kontum-Pleiku provinces in South Vietnam has come under increasing use as a base area by North Vietnamese units since early last year.

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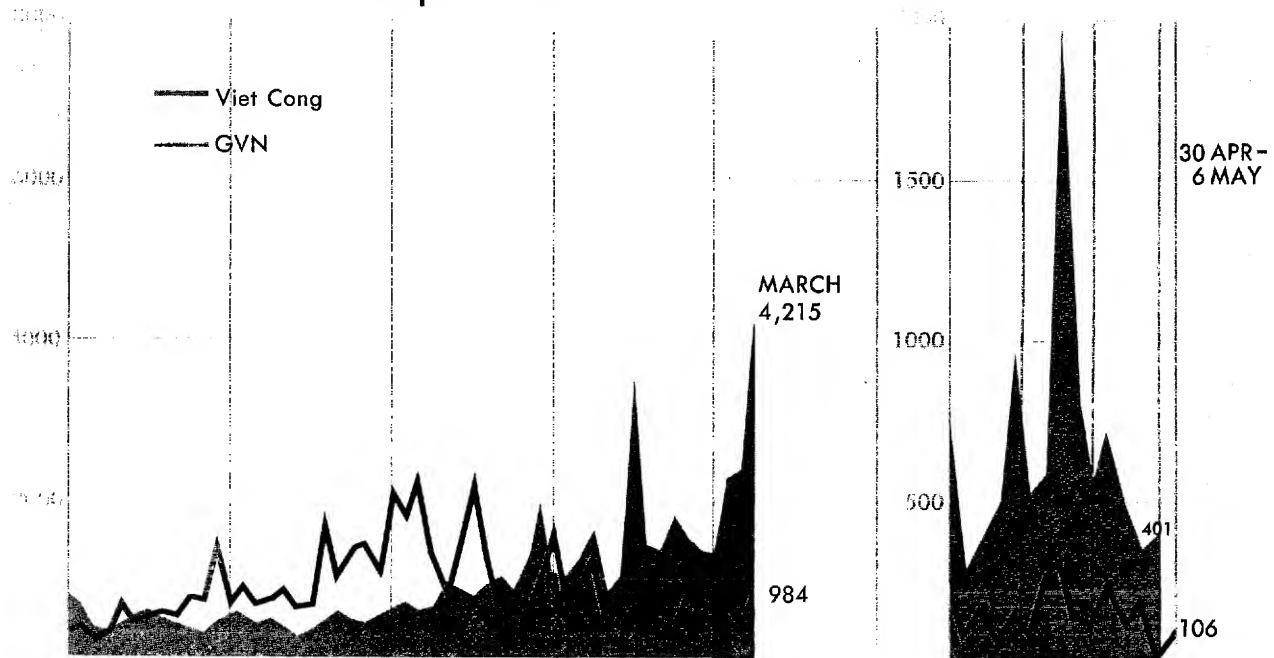
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
standard and meter--track extending 12 miles farther north from the last observed cut-off point nine miles north of Cao Nung. It is probable that the entire Kep - Ping-hsiang segment of the Hanoi - Dong Dang line may be dual gauge, although there is as yet no complete photographic confirmation. Standard gauge trains, however, have been observed on the Kep - Cao Nung section of the line.

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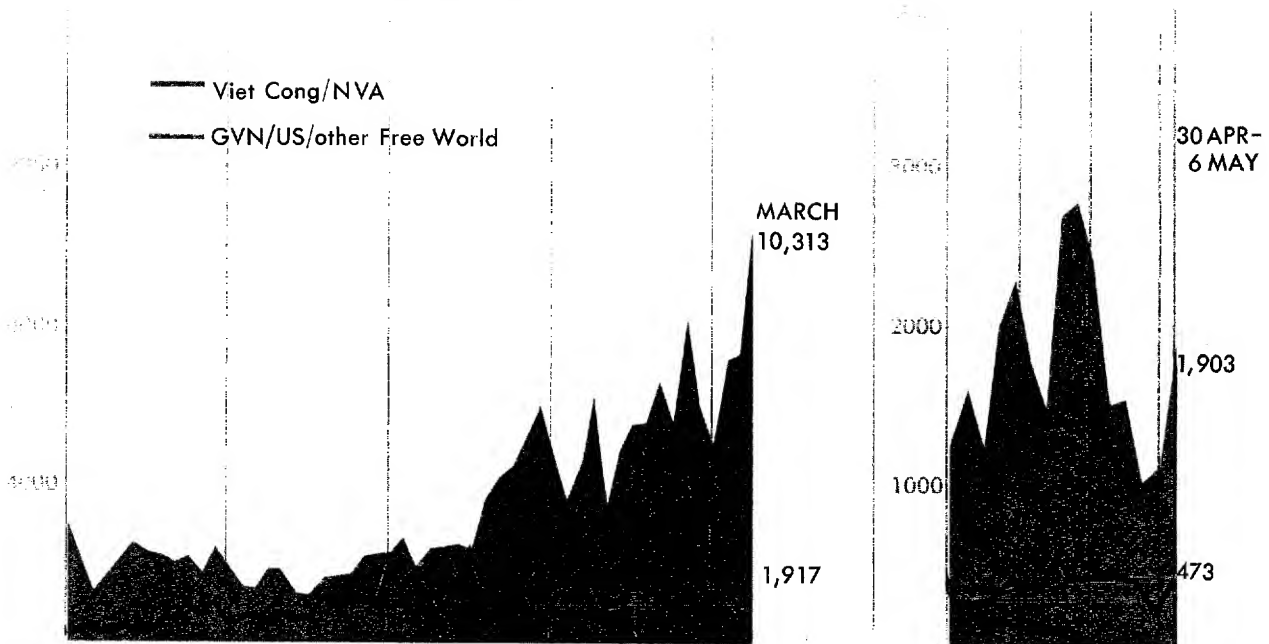
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Weapons Losses



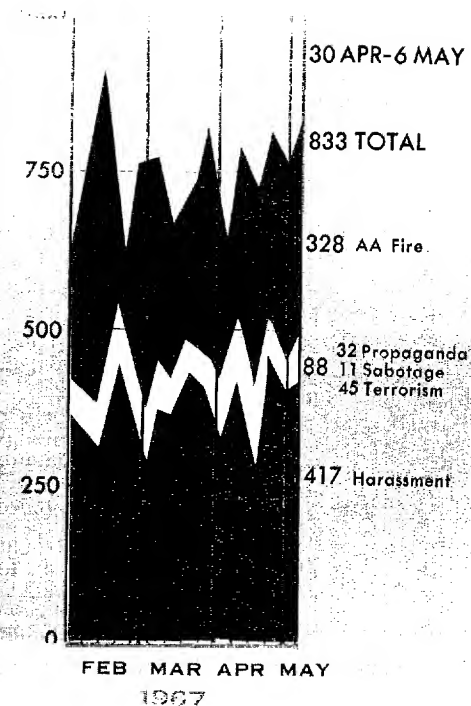
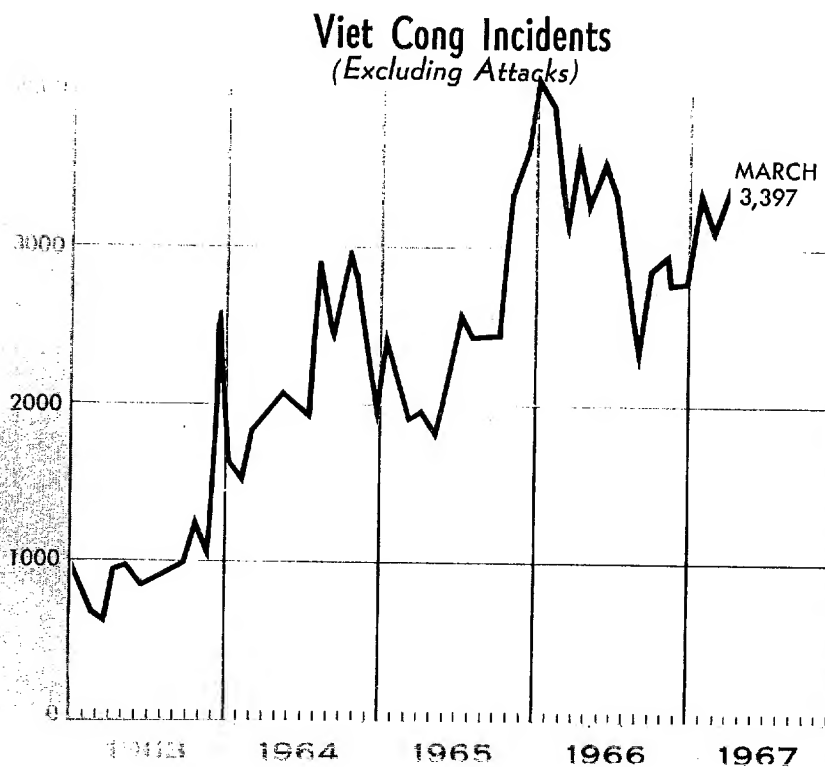
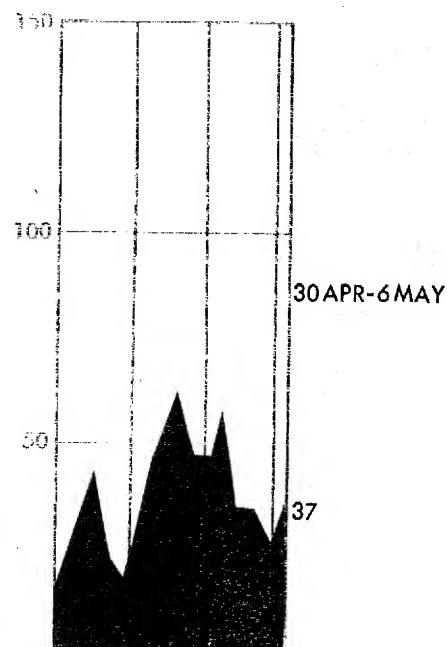
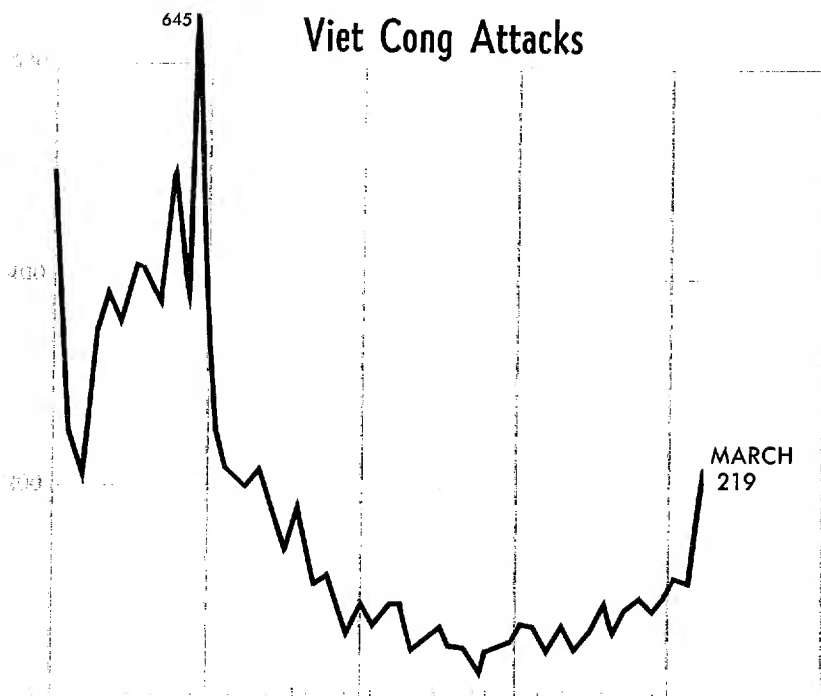
Personnel Losses (Killed only)*



US Casualties to Date: Killed 9,680 Wounded 57,823 Captured 157 Missing 403

*Due to a change in the reporting of personnel losses, beginning 12 February 1967, the weekly figure will represent only personnel killed.

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